

# PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES



# ON INTELLIGENCE



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY : OFFICE OF TRAINING

**PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES**  
**ON**  
**INTELLIGENCE**



**APRIL 1975**

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## Preface....

Until World War II, the conduct of foreign intelligence activities by the United States government was sporadic, and most Americans were not aware of them. Presidents of the United States, who have always borne the responsibility for the national security, have made statements, particularly in recent years, that have both acknowledged the existence of intelligence activities and revealed their importance in support of governmental policies and functions.

Selected Presidential statements dealing with U.S. intelligence activities have been extracted for presentation in this pamphlet. Although the statements of George Washington were written while he was the commanding general during the American Revolution, they are significant enough to warrant inclusion here. The terms of both Presidents Lincoln and Wilson were marked by major wars, but neither appears to have made a significant statement on the subject of intelligence.



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF TRAINING - FEBRUARY 1975

*George Washington*



There was no centralized intelligence organization in any modern concept of the word during the American Revolution. The Americans and British both employed agents to secure information on troop deployments and strengths, and there were officers specifically charged with intelligence functions, although almost without exception these functions were added to officers' regular line duties. Thus, Major John Andre handled intelligence matters for Britain's General Clinton in New York and when Andre became Adjutant General of the British Armies in America, he continued to conduct certain special intelligence cases, including the defection of General Benedict Arnold from West Point.

General Forman, an American line officer in New Jersey, was Washington's intelligence chief in that area for a time. In connection with his intelligence activities, General Forman wrote Governor Livingston of New Jersey in February 1782 as follows:

*"I presume Your Excellency is not unacquainted that I am at the particular request of General Washington employed in obtaining intelligence respecting the enemies movements at New York &c. By the Generals Letter to me of the 25 Inst. he in a very pointed manner asks my particular exertions as affairs at this time demand the best Intelligence."*

General Washington kept closely informed on all intelligence matters and was perhaps the most able American intelligence officer prior to General William Donovan, Director of the Office of Strategic Services during World War II. General Washington often levied intelligence requirements on his intelligence officers and then made his own estimates of the military situation based on the evidence they acquired. He directed what we now call psychological warfare campaigns and had a fine feel for intelligence activities.

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*"The necessity of procuring good Intelligence is apparent & need not be further urged -- all that remains for me to add, is, that you keep the whole matter as secret as possible. For upon Secrecy, Success depends in most Enterprizes of the kind, and for want of it, they are generally defeated, however well planned and promising a favourable issue."*

Letter from General Washington  
to Colonel Elias Dayton,  
then his intelligence chief  
in New Jersey, 26 July 1777.

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*"I have received your Letter of the 4th, containing an apology for sending an agreeable piece of Intelligence which you have since discover'd to be false; mistakes of this kind are not uncommon and most frequently happen to those whose zeal and sanguineness allow no room for scepticism when anything favourable to their country is plausibly related."*

Letter from General Washington  
to Daniel Clymer, Deputy Commissary  
General of Prisoners,  
11 November 1777.

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Three of General Washington's best spies were seized for prosecution by the American authorities in New Jersey under misapprehension that they were British agents. These prisoners could not disclose their true role. However, Washington learned of their capture and wrote the Governor of New Jersey for their release.

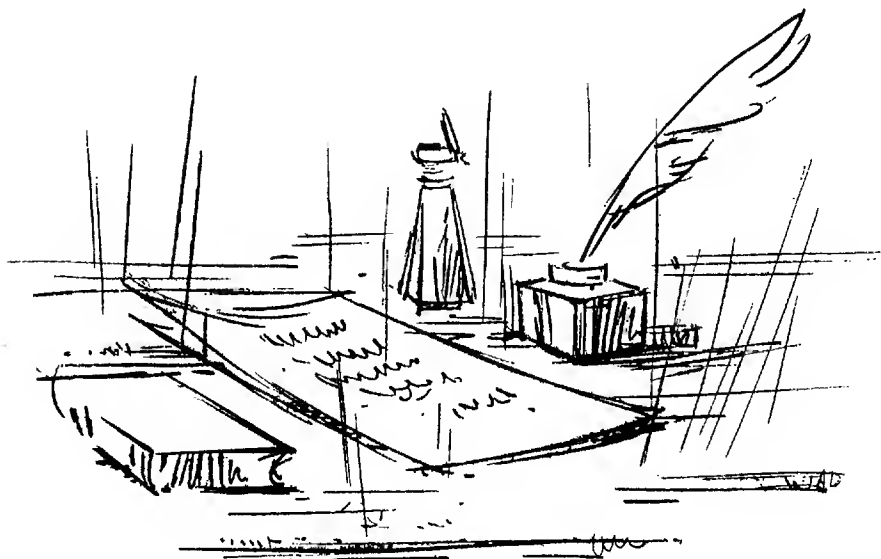
*"Upon these Considerations I hope you will put a stop to the prosecution, unless other matters appear against them. You must be well convinced, that it is indispensibly necessary to make use of these means to procure intelligence. The persons employed must bear the suspicion of being thought inimical, and it is not in their power to assert their innocence, because that would get abroad and destroy the confidence which the Enemy puts in them."*

Letter from General Washington  
to Governor William Livingston,  
20 January 1778.

*"I thank you for the trouble you have taken in forwarding the intelligence which was inclosed in your Letter of the 11th of March. It is by comparing a variety of information, we are frequently enabled to investigate facts, which were so intricate or hidden, that no single clue could have led to the knowledge of them in this point of view, intelligence becomes interesting which but from its connection and collateral circumstances, would not be important."*

Letter from General Washington  
to James Lovell,  
1 April 1782.

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## *James K. Polk...*

In 1846, certain members of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs raised a furor over the alleged misuse of foreign intercourse funds by Daniel Webster, while he served as Secretary of State. Portions of these funds, known as Secret Service Funds, were available for unvouchered use on the certificate of the President that their expenditure had been for confidential purposes. A resolution of the House of Representatives requested President James K. Polk to furnish the House with all records of expenditures of these confidential Secret Service Funds during Webster's tenure as Secretary of State under Presidents Harrison and Tyler. In denying the request of the House of Representatives, President Polk wrote:

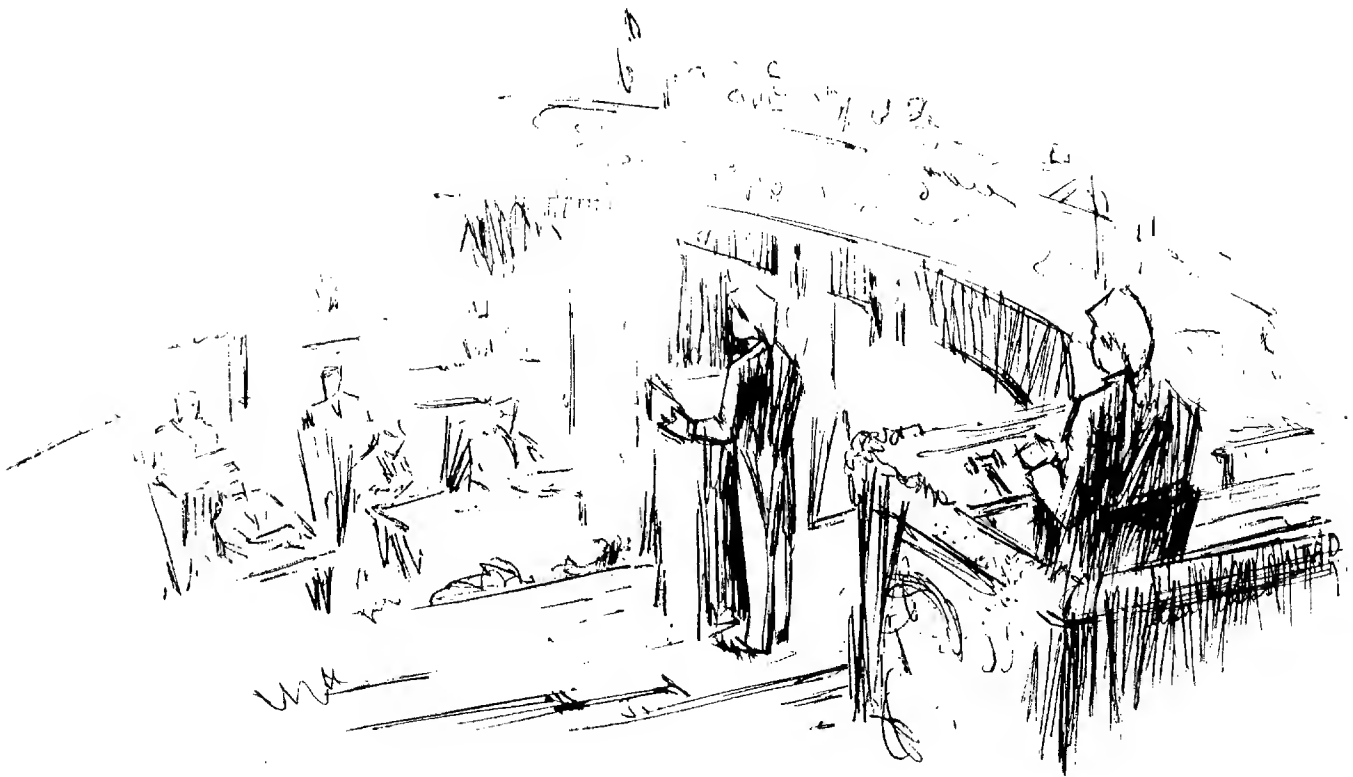
*"The experience of every nation on earth has demonstrated that emergencies may arise in which it becomes absolutely necessary for the public safety or the public good to make expenditures the very object of which would be defeated by publicity. ... In no nation is the application of such sums ever made public. In time of war or impending danger the situation of the country may make it necessary to employ individuals for the purpose of obtaining information or rendering other important services who could never be prevailed upon to act if they entertained the least apprehension that their names or their agency would in any contingency be divulged. So it may often become necessary to incur an expenditure for an object highly useful to the country; ... But this*



*object might be altogether defeated by the intrigues of other powers if our purposes were to be made known by the exhibition of the original papers and vouchers to the accounting officers of the Treasury. It would be easy to specify other cases which may occur in the history of a great nation, in its intercourse with other nations, wherein it might become absolutely necessary to incur expenditures for objects which could never be accomplished if it were suspected in advance that the items of expenditure and the agencies employed would be made public."*

President Polk's message  
to the House of Representatives,  
20 April 1846.

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## *Franklin D. Roosevelt....*

*"Apropos of your memorandum of November 18, 1944, relative to the establishment of a central intelligence service, I should appreciate your calling together the chiefs of the foreign intelligence and internal security units in the various executive agencies, so that a consensus of opinion can be secured.*

*"It appears to me that all of the ten executive departments, as well as the Foreign Economic Administration, and the Federal Communications Commission have a direct interest in the proposed venture. They should all be asked to contribute their suggestions to the proposed centralized intelligence service."*

Memorandum from President Roosevelt to Major General William J. Donovan, Director of the Strategic Services, 5 April 1945. Written just a week before the President's death, it authorizes Donovan to continue planning for a postwar centralized intelligence service.



## *Harry S. Truman....*




President Truman was conscious of rivalry among U.S. intelligence organizations both during and after World War II. He realized that reorganization was necessary and that a reorganization plan needed to be developed, from competing proposals, which would not exacerbate these rivalries. The following reflects President Truman's thinking on the subject prior to the establishment of the Central Intelligence Group in 1946 and ultimately of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1947.

*"I considered it very important to this country to have a sound, well-organized intelligence system, both in the present and in the future. Properly developed, such a service would require new concepts as well as better-trained and more competent personnel. ... it was imperative that we refrain from rushing into something that would produce harmful and unnecessary rivalries among the various intelligence agencies. I told Smith (Director of the Bureau of the Budget) that one thing was certain--this country wanted no Gestapo under any guise or for any reason."*

Memoirs by Harry S.  
Truman, Volume One:  
Year of Decisions.

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*"A President has to know what is going on all around the world in order to be ready to act when action is needed. The President must have all the facts that may affect the foreign policy or the military policy of the United States. ..."*

 "Before 1946 such information as the President needed was being collected in several different places in the government. The War Department had an Intelligence Division--G-2--and the Navy had an intelligence setup of its own--the ONI. The Department of State, on the one hand, got its information through diplomatic channels, while the Treasury and the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture each had channels for gathering information from different parts of the world--on monetary, economic, and agricultural matters.

"During World War II the Federal Bureau of Investigation had some operations abroad, and in addition the Office of Strategic Services, which was set up by President Roosevelt during the war and placed under the direction of General William J. Donovan, operated abroad to gather information.

"This scattered method of getting information for the various departments of the government first struck me as being badly organized when I was in the Senate. Our Senate committees, hearing the witnesses from the executive departments, were often struck by the fact that different agencies of the government came up with different and conflicting facts on similar subjects. It was not at first apparent that this was due to the un-co-ordinated methods of obtaining information. Since then, however, I have often thought that if there had been something like co-ordination of information in the government it would have been more difficult, if not impossible, for the Japanese to succeed in the sneak attack at Pearl Harbor. In those days the military did not know everything the State Department knew, and the diplomats did not have access to all the Army and Navy knew. The Army and the Navy, in fact, had only a very informal arrangement to keep each other informed as to their plans.

"In other words, there had never been much attention paid to any centralized intelligence organization in our government. Apparently the United States saw no need for a really comprehensive system of foreign intelligence until World War II placed American fighting men on the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa and on the islands of the Atlantic and the Pacific.

"The war taught us this lesson--that we had to collect intelligence in a manner that would make the information available where it was needed and when it was wanted, in an intelligent and understandable form. If it is not intelligent and understandable, it is useless.

"On becoming President, I found that the needed intelligence information was not co-ordinated at any one place. Reports came across my desk on the same subject at different times from the various departments, and these reports often conflicted. Consequently I asked Admiral Leahy if anything was being done to improve the system. Leahy told me that in 1944, at President Roosevelt's direction, he had referred to the Joint Chiefs of Staff a plan for centralized intelligence work prepared by General Donovan. This plan, so Leahy told me, provided for an organization directly under the President and responsible only to him. The Navy, however, had worked out a counterproposal under which there would be a central agency to serve as an over-all intelligence organization, but with each of the departments responsible for national security having a stake in it. Much of the original work on this project was done by Rear Admiral Sidney W. Souers, Deputy Chief of Naval Intelligence.

"Sometime later I asked Secretary of State Byrnes to submit his recommendations for a way to co-ordinate intelligence services among the departments, explaining that I had already asked Leahy to look into the subject but that I wanted the State Department's recommendations since the State Department would need to play an important role in the operation.

"Secretary Byrnes took the position that such an organization should be responsible to the Secretary of State and advised me that he should be in control of all intelligence. The Army and the Navy, on the other hand, strongly objected. They maintained that every department required its own intelligence but that there was a great need for a central organization to gather together all information that had to do with over-all national policy. Under such an organization there would

*be a pool of information, and each agency would contribute to it. This pool would make it possible for those who were responsible for establishing policies in foreign political and military fields to draw on authoritative intelligence for their guidance.*

*"In January 1946 I held a series of meetings in my office to examine the various plans suggested for a centralized intelligence authority."*

Memoirs by Harry S. Truman,  
Volume Two: Years of Trial  
and Hope.

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*"Whether it be treason or not, it does the United States just as much harm for military secrets to be made known to potential enemies through open publication, as it does for military secrets to be given to an enemy through the clandestine operations of spies. ...*

*"...I do not believe that the best solution can be reached by adopting an approach based on the theory that everyone has a right to know our military secrets and related information affecting the national security."*

Statement read by President  
Truman at a news conference,  
referring to an executive  
order on the handling of  
classified information,  
4 October 1951.

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*"When I became President--if you don't mind me reminiscing a little bit--there was no concentration of information for the benefit of the President. Each department and each organization had its own information service, and that information service was walled off from every other service in such a manner that*

whenever it was necessary for the President to have information, he had to send to two or three departments to get it, and then he would have to have somebody do a little digging to get it. ....

"...And finally one morning I had a conversation with Admiral Leahy, and suggested to him that there should be a Central Intelligence Agency, for the benefit of the whole government as well as for the benefit of the President, so he could be informed.

"And the Admiral and I proceeded to try to work out a program. It has worked very successfully. We have an intelligence information service now that I think is not inferior to any in the world.

"We have the Central Intelligence Agency, and all the intelligence information agencies in all the rest of the departments of the government, coordinated by that Central Intelligence Agency. This agency puts the information of vital importance to the President in his hands. He has to know what is going on everywhere at home and abroad, so that he can intelligently make the decisions that are necessary to keep the government running. ....

"...You are the organization, you are the intelligence arm that keeps the Executive informed so that he can make decisions that always will be in the public interest for his own country, hoping always that it will save the free world from involvement with the totalitarian countries in an all-out war--a terrible thing to contemplate.

"Those of you who are deep in the Central Intelligence Agency know what goes on around the world--know what is necessary for the President to know every morning. I am briefed every day on all the world, on everything that takes place from one end of the world to the other, all the way around--by both the poles and the other way. It is necessary that you make that contribution for the welfare and benefit of your government.

*"I came over here to tell you how appreciative I am of the service which I received as the Chief Executive of the greatest nation in the history of the world."*

Remarks of President Truman  
to a CIA Orientation Course,  
21 November 1952.

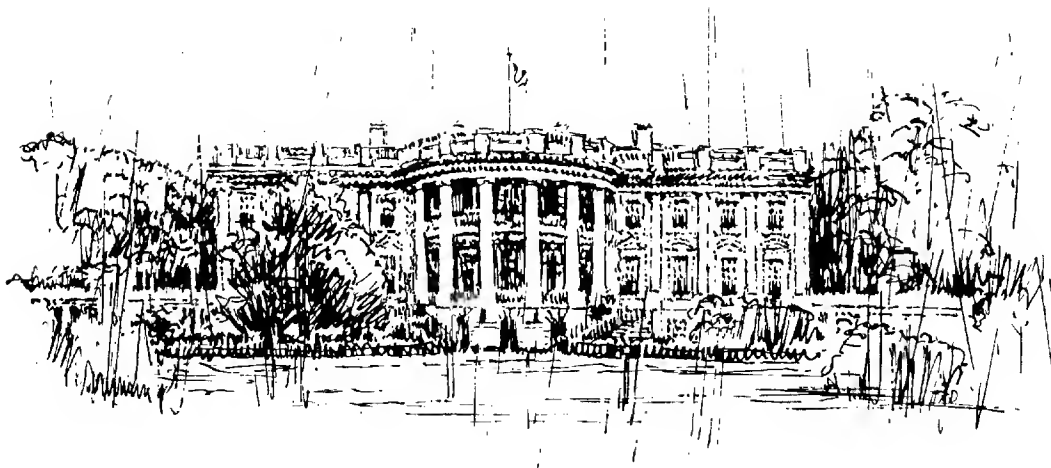
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Inscription on the photograph of President Truman, which he presented to CIA:

*"To the Central Intelligence Agency, a necessity to the President of the United States, from one who knows."*

*Harry S. Truman  
June 9, 1964"*

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## *Dwight D. Eisenhower ...*

"America's fundamental aspiration is the preservation of peace. To this end we seek to develop policies and arrangements to make the peace both permanent and just. This can be done only on the basis of comprehensive and appropriate information.

"In war nothing is more important to a commander than the facts concerning the strength, dispositions, and intentions of his opponent, and the proper interpretation of those facts. In peacetime the necessary facts are of a different nature. They deal with conditions, resources, requirements, and attitudes prevailing in the world. They and their correct interpretation are essential to the development of policy to further our long-term national security and best interests. To provide information of this kind is the task of the organization of which you are a part.

"No task could be more important.

"Upon the quality of your work depends in large measure the success of our effort to further the nation's position in the international scene.

"By its very nature the work of this agency demands of its members the highest order of dedication, ability, trustworthiness, and selflessness--to say nothing of the finest type of courage, whenever needed. Success cannot be advertised: failure cannot be explained. In the work of intelligence, heroes are undecorated and unsung, often

even among their own fraternity. Their inspiration is rooted in patriotism--their reward can be little except the conviction that they are performing a unique and indispensable service for their country, and the knowledge that America needs and appreciates their efforts. I assure you this is indeed true.

"The reputation of your organization for quality and excellence of performance, ... is a proud one.

"Because I deeply believe these things, I deem it a great privilege to participate in this ceremony of cornerstone laying for the national headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency. On this spot will rise a beautiful and useful structure. May it long endure, to serve the cause of America and of peace."

Remarks of President Eisenhower  
at the cornerstone-laying ceremony  
for the CIA building,  
3 November 1959.

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"I have made some notes from which I want to talk to you about this U-2 incident. ...

"The first point is this: the need for intelligence-gathering activities.

"No one wants another Pearl Harbor. This means that we must have knowledge of military forces and preparations around the world, especially those capable of massive surprise attacks.

"Secrecy in the Soviet Union makes this essential. ...

"...ever since the beginning of my administration I have issued directives to gather, in every feasible way, the information required to protect the United States and the free world against surprise attack and to enable them to make effective preparations for defense.

*"My second point: the nature of intelligence-gathering activities.*

*"These have a special and secret character. They are, so to speak, 'below the surface' activities.*

*"They are secret because they must circumvent measures designed by other countries to protect secrecy of military preparations.*

*"They are divorced from the regular visible agencies of government which stay clear of operational involvement in specific detailed activities.*

*"These elements operate under broad directives to seek and gather intelligence short of the use of force--with operations supervised by responsible officials within this area of secret activities. ...*

*"These activities have their own rules and methods of concealment which seek to mislead and obscure-- ...*

*"Third point: how should we view all of this activity?*

*"It is a distasteful but vital necessity.*

*"We prefer and work for a different kind of world--and a different way of obtaining the information essential to confidence and effective deterrents. Open societies, in the day of present weapons, are the only answer. ...*

*"My final point is that we must not be distracted from the real issues of the day by what is an incident or a symptom of the world situation today."*

Statement by President Eisenhower  
at his news conference of 11 May  
1960, following the shooting down  
of a U-2 by the Soviet Union.

*"...Accordingly, at this morning's private session, despite the violence and inaccuracy of Mr. Khrushchev's statements, I replied to him on the following terms: ...*

*"In my statement of May 11th and in the statement of Secretary Herter of May 9th, the position of the United States was made clear with respect to the distasteful necessity of espionage activities in a world where nations distrust each other's intentions. We pointed out that these activities had no aggressive intent but rather were to assure the safety of the United States and the free world against surprise attack by a power which boasts of its ability to devastate the United States and other countries by missiles armed with atomic warheads. As is well known, not only the United States but most other countries are constantly the targets of elaborate and persistent espionage of the Soviet Union."*

Statement by President Eisenhower concerning the positions taken by Chairman Khrushchev at the opening of the Paris summit conference, 16 May 1960.

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*"During the period leading up to World War II we learned from bitter experience the imperative necessity of a continuous gathering of intelligence information, ...*

*"Moreover, as President, charged by the Constitution with the conduct of America's foreign relations, and as Commander-in-Chief, charged with the direction of the operations and activities of our Armed Forces and their supporting services, I take full responsibility for approving all the various programs undertaken by our government to secure and evaluate military intelligence.*

*"It was in the prosecution of one of these intelligence programs that the widely publicized U-2 incident occurred.*

*"Aerial photography has been one of many methods we have used to keep ourselves and the free world abreast of major Soviet military developments. The usefulness of this work has been well established through four years of effort. The Soviets were well aware of it. ...*

*"The plain truth is this: when a nation needs intelligence activity, there is no time when vigilance can be relaxed. Incidentally, from Pearl Harbor we learned that even negotiation itself can be used to conceal preparations for a surprise attack. ...*

*"...It must be remembered that over a long period, these flights had given us information of the greatest importance to the nation's security. In fact, their success has been nothing short of remarkable. ...*

*"I then made two facts clear to the public: first, our program of aerial reconnaissance had been undertaken with my approval; second, this government is compelled to keep abreast, by one means or another, of military activities of the Soviets, just as their government has for years engaged in espionage activities in our country and throughout the world."*

President Eisenhower's radio  
and television report to the  
American people, following  
the Paris summit conference,  
25 May 1960.

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*"As I think you know, I wish you and your associates in the Central Intelligence Agency well in the tremendously important job you do for our country. Upon the work of your organization there is an almost frightening responsibility; I know all members of the CIA will continue to do the best they can for all of us."*

Letter from President Eisenhower to Mr. Allen W. Dulles, Director of Central Intelligence, 18 January 1961, at the conclusion of the Eisenhower Administration.

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*"For: The Central Intelligence Agency*

*An indispensable organization to our country.*

*Dwight D. Eisenhower"*

Inscription on the photograph of President Eisenhower, which he presented to CIA.



## *John F. Kennedy....*

*"I want, first of all, to express my appreciation to you all for the opportunity that this ceremony gives to tell you how grateful we are in the government and in the country for the services that the personnel of this Agency render to the country.*

*"It is not always easy. Your successes are unheralded-- your failures are trumpeted. I sometimes have that feeling myself. But I am sure you realize how important is your work, how essential it is--and how, in the long sweep of history, how significant your efforts will be judged.*

*"So I do want to express my appreciation to you now, and I'm confident that in the future you will continue to merit the appreciation of our country, as you have in the past."*

Remarks of President Kennedy  
at the CIA Headquarters,  
28 November 1961, on presenting the National Security Medal to Allen W. Dulles, the retiring Director of Central Intelligence.

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*"...it is my wish that you serve as the government's principal foreign intelligence officer, and as such that you undertake, as an integral part of your responsibilities, the coordination and effective guidance of the total United States foreign*

intelligence effort. As the government's principal intelligence officer, you will assure the proper coordination, correlation, and evaluation of intelligence from all sources and its prompt dissemination to me and to other recipients as appropriate. In fulfillment of these tasks I shall expect you to work closely with the heads of all departments and agencies having responsibilities in the foreign intelligence field. ...

"As directed by the President and the National Security Council, you will establish with the advice and assistance of the United States Intelligence Board the necessary policies and procedures to assure adequate coordination of foreign intelligence activities at all levels."

Memorandum from President Kennedy  
to the Director of Central  
Intelligence, 16 January 1962.

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"I wish to express to you, the members of the United States Intelligence Board, and to the individual members of the intelligence agencies my deep and sincere appreciation for your outstanding service to our Nation--and the Free World--during the recent international crisis.

"In the course of the past few months I have had occasion to again observe the extraordinary accomplishments of our intelligence community, and I have been singularly impressed with the overall professional excellence, selfless devotion to duty, resourcefulness and initiative manifested in the work of this group. The fact that we had timely and accurate information, skillfully analyzed and clearly presented, to guide us in our judgments during this crisis is, I believe, the greatest tribute to the effectiveness of these individuals and agencies. The magnitude of their contribution can be measured, in part, by the fact that the peace was sustained during a most critical time.



"It is, of course, a great source of strength to me to know that we have such dedicated and skilled men and women in the service of our Nation in these times of peril. Although I cannot personally commend each member of the intelligence community for their individual efforts, I would like you to convey to them, through the members of the United States Intelligence Board, my personal word of commendation, my deep admiration for their achievements, and the appreciation of a grateful Nation."

Letter of commendation from President Kennedy to John A. McCone, Director of Central Intelligence, in the latter's capacity as Chairman of the United States Intelligence Board, 9 January 1963, after the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962.

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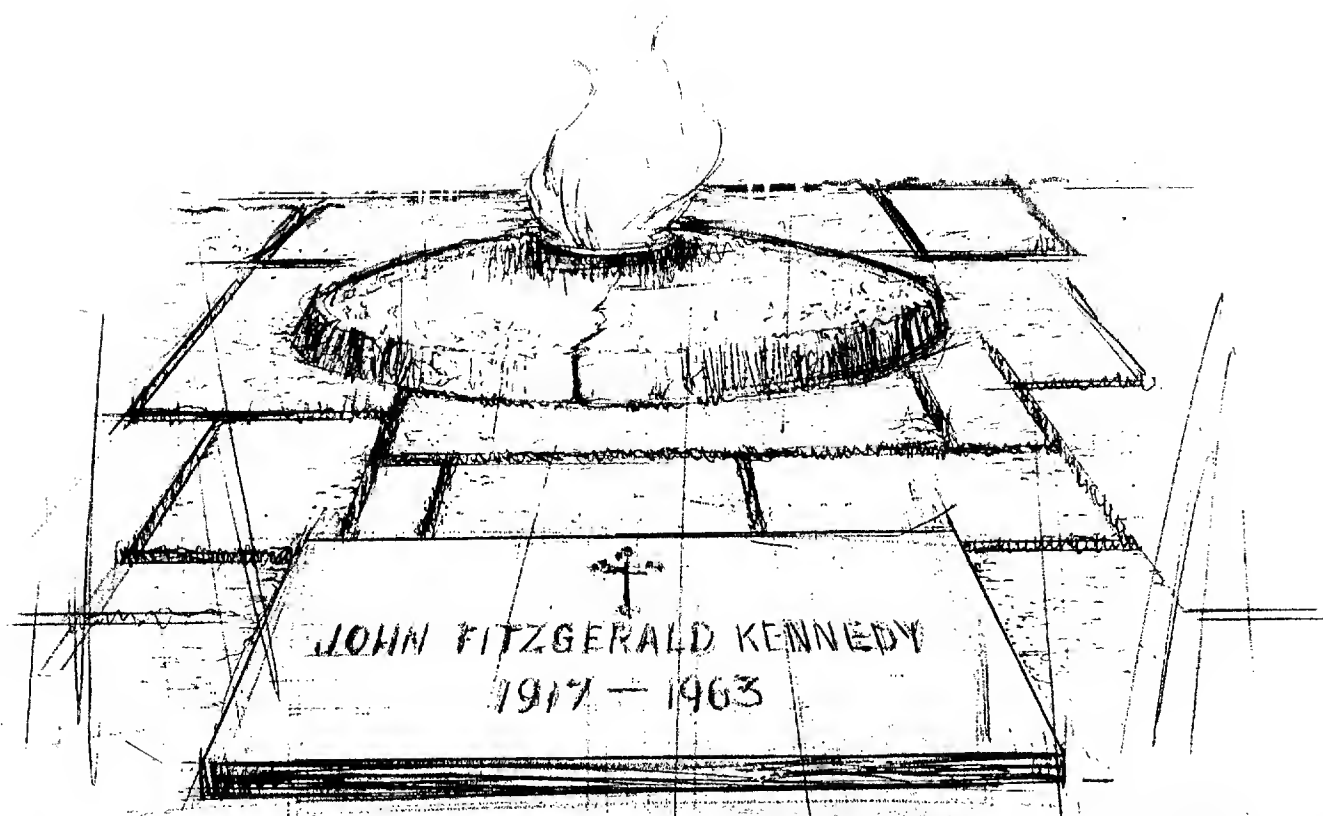
"...We have worked very closely together in the National Security Council in the last two months attempting to meet the problems we faced in South Viet-Nam. I can find nothing, and I have looked through the record very carefully over the last nine months, and I could go back further, to indicate that the CIA has done anything but support policy. It does not create policy; it attempts to execute it in those areas where it has competence and responsibility. ... I can just assure you flatly that the CIA has not carried out independent activities but has operated under close control of the Director of Central Intelligence, operating with the cooperation of the National Security Council and under my instructions.

"So I think that while the CIA may have made mistakes, as we all do, on different occasions, and has had many successes which may go unheralded, in my opinion in this case it is unfair to charge

*them as they have been charged. I think they have done a good job."*

Statement by President Kennedy  
at a news conference in response  
to a question on whether CIA  
was conducting unauthorized  
activities in South Vietnam,  
9 October 1963.

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## *Lyndon B. Johnson....*

*"...we have committed our lives, our property, our resources, and our sacred honor to the freedom and peace of other men, indeed to the freedom and peace of all mankind. We would dishonor that commitment, we would disgrace all the sacrifices that Americans have made if we were not every hour of every day vigilant against every threat to peace and freedom. That is why we have the Central Intelligence Agency in this country.*



*"The purpose of this effort, like the purpose of all that we do, is to strive for an orderly, just, and peaceful world. In this effort more than in many others a high order of selflessness, of dedication, of devotion, is asked of men and women. The compensation of them comes not in fame, certainly not in rewards of salary, but the reward of the sure knowledge that they have made a contribution to freedom's cause.*

*"For the leadership of this vital agency this nation has been very fortunate to have the services of outstanding Americans: Allen Dulles, John McCone, now today Admiral William F. Raborn."*

Remarks of President Johnson  
at the swearing-in ceremony of  
Vice Admiral Raborn as Director  
of Central Intelligence and  
Mr. Richard M. Helms as Deputy  
Director of Central Intelligence,  
28 April 1965.

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*"You know it is my hope that we can continue to build and strengthen the effectiveness of the Agency, making full utilization of the imaginative talent assembled in the organization. I hope ... to assure and encourage all your employees to realize that their personal abilities and superior performance do not go unnoticed or unrecognized.*

*"Our intelligence must be unquestionably the best in the world. You have my full support in our effort to make it so."*

Letter from President Johnson  
to Vice Admiral William F. Raborn,  
Director of Central Intelligence,  
regarding the appointment of  
Mrs. Penelope Thunberg, CIA,  
to the U.S. Tariff Commission,  
29 July 1965.

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*"The interests of national defense and security require sustained effort on the part of the Intelligence Community to support me and other officials having policy and command responsibilities. ... Efficient management and direction of the complex activities which make up the total foreign intelligence effort are essential to meet day-to-day national requirements and to ensure the development and application of advanced means for the collection, processing, analysis, estimating and reporting of intelligence information."*

Memorandum from President Johnson  
to the Director of Central Intelligence,  
19 October 1965, on the  
foreign intelligence activities  
of the United States.

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*"In 2-1/2 years of working with these men I have yet to meet a '007.' I have met dozens of men who are moved and motivated by the highest and most patriotic and dedicated purposes--men who are specialists in economics, and political science, and history, and geography, and physics, and many other fields where logic and analysis are crucial to the decisions that the President of their country is called upon to make. Through my experience with these men I have learned that their most significant triumphs come not in the secrets passed in the dark but in patient reading, hour after hour, of highly technical periodicals.*

*"In a real sense they are America's professional students; they are unsung, just as they are invaluable."*

Remarks of President Johnson  
at the swearing-in ceremony  
of Mr. Richard M. Helms as  
Director of Central Intelligence,  
30 June 1966.

*"Your countrymen ... cannot know of your accomplishments in the equally crucial business of the Central Intelligence Agency. For it is the lot of those in our intelligence agencies that they should work in silence--sometimes fail in silence, but more often succeed in silence.*

*"Unhappily, also, it is sometimes their lot that they must suffer in silence. For, like all in high public position, they are occasionally subject to criticism which they must not answer.*

*"Secrecy in this work is essential. Achievements and triumphs can seldom be advertised. Shortcomings and failures often are advertised. The rewards can never come in public acclaim, only in the quiet satisfaction of getting on with the job and trying to do well the work that needs to be done in the interests of your Nation.*

*"The best intelligence is essential to the best policy. So I am delighted that you have undertaken, as far as security permits, to tell the public that it is well served by the Central Intelligence Agency.*

*"I am glad that there are occasions from time to time when I, like my predecessors in this office, can also express my deep confidence in the expert and the dedicated service of the personnel of the Central Intelligence Agency."*

Remarks of President at the  
presentation of the National  
Security Medal to Vice Admiral  
William F. Raborn for his  
services as Director of Central  
Intelligence, 17 August 1966.

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*"This is a day when you should all be proud-- especially those among you who have been a part of the Agency since its founding.*

*"Twenty years ago, this country had no broad-scale professional intelligence service worthy of the name. Today, it has a strong and vital one-- the best in the world.*

*"Twenty years ago, you began with a vague assortment of functions and a varied assortment of people. Your purposes were not well understood inside the Government, and barely understood at all outside. Since that time, you have become a dedicated and disciplined core of professionals, with clearly defined responsibilities.*

*"Those responsibilities are vast and demanding. You give us information on which decisions affecting the course of history are made. Your product must be as perfect as is humanly possible-- though the material you must work with is far from perfect.*

*"You must keep pace with developments in a tremendously complex society, a society which, as Mr. Helms has said, 'grope for answers to challenges its founding fathers could never have conceived.'"*

*"You have built a solid foundation in these past twenty years. America relies on your constant dedication to the truth--on your commitment to our democratic ideal. I believe our trust is well placed."*

Message from President Johnson  
on the occasion of the 20th  
anniversary of the founding  
of CIA, 18 September 1967.





## *Richard M. Nixon ...*

*"...Going back during the eight years I was Vice President, I sat on the National Security Council and there I learned to respect the organization, its Director and its reports that were made to the Council, and through the Council to the President of the United States.*

*...*

*"And in a sense, then, I look upon this organization as not one that is necessary for the conduct of conflict or war, or call it what you may, but in the final analysis as one of the great instruments of our government for the preservation of peace, for the avoidance of war, and for the development of a society in which this kind of activity would not be as necessary, if necessary at all.*

*"It is that that I think the American people need to understand, that this is a necessary adjunct to the conduct of the Presidency. And I am keenly aware of that. I am keenly aware of the fact that many of you at times must have had doubts, perhaps you have not, but perhaps there may have been times that you have had doubts about your mission, the popularity of what you do in the country, and I want to reassure you on that score.*

*...*

*"I realize that in this organization the great majority of you are not in the kind of covert activities which involve great danger, but I also know that some of your colleagues have been involved in such activities and are involved in such activities.*



*"I know, too, that there will be no Purple Hearts, there will be no medals, there will be no recognition of those who have served far beyond the call of duty because by definition where the CIA is concerned your successes must never be publicized and your failures will always be publicized.*

*"So that makes your mission a particularly difficult one. It makes it difficult from the standpoint of those who must render service beyond the call of duty. And I recognize that and I am deeply grateful for those who are willing to make that kind of sacrifice.*

*...*

*"So, finally, I would simply say that I understand that when President Truman in 1964 sent a message to the CIA, he put an inscription on it which, as I recall, went something like this: To the CIA, an organization which is an absolute necessity to any President of the United States. From one who knows.*

*"I know. And I appreciate what you do."*

Remarks of President Nixon at  
CIA Headquarters, 7 March 1969.

☆ ☆ ☆

*"This organization, the CIA, has a distinguished record of being bipartisan in character. It is a highly professional group. It will remain that in this Administration ... ."*

Remarks of President Nixon  
at the swearing-in ceremony  
of General Cushman as Deputy  
Director of Central Intelligence,  
7 May 1969.

☆ ☆ ☆

*"... I have ordered the Central Intelligence Agency, early in this Administration, to mobilize its full resources to fight the international drug trade, a task, incidentally, in which it has performed superbly.*

*"Let me interject here a word for that much maligned agency. As I have often said, in the field of intelligence we always find that the failures are those that are publicized. Its successes, by definition, must always be secret, and in this area there are many successes and particularly ones for which this agency can be very proud."*

Remarks of President Nixon to  
Senior U.S. Narcotics Control  
Officials attending the  
International Narcotics Control  
Conference at the Department  
of State, Washington, D.C.,  
18 September 1972.



## Gerald R. Ford....

"In the world in which we live, beset by continuing threats to our national security, it is vital that we maintain an effective intelligence and counterintelligence capability. This capability is fundamental in providing the safeguards that protect our national interests and help avert armed conflict. The Central Intelligence Agency has had a notable record of many successes in this field, but by the nature of its operations, such successes and achievements cannot be divulged publicly.

*It is essential in this republic that we meet our security requirements and at the same time avoid impairing our democratic institutions and fundamental freedoms. Intelligence activities must be conducted consistently with both objectives."*

Statement of President Ford  
on the establishment of a  
commission to investigate  
press allegations against  
the CIA, 4 January 1975.

☆ ☆ ☆

"In a world where information is power, a vital element of our national security lies in our intelligence services. They are essential to our nation's security in peace as in war. Americans can be grateful for the important, but largely unsung contributions and achievements of the intelligence services of this nation.

"It is entirely proper that this system be subject to Congressional review. But a sensationalized public debate over legitimate intelligence activities is a disservice to this nation and a threat to our intelligence system. It ties our hands while our potential enemies operate with secrecy, with skill and with vast resources. Any investigation must be conducted with maximum discretion and dispatch, to avoid crippling a vital national institution.

"Let me speak quite frankly to some in this chamber and perhaps to some not in this chamber. The Central Intelligence Agency has been of maximum importance to Presidents before me. The CIA has been of maximum importance to me. The Central Intelligence Agency and its associated intelligence organizations could be of maximum importance to some of you in this audience who might be President at some later date.

"I think it would be catastrophic for the Congress or anyone else to destroy the usefulness by dismantling in effect our intelligence system upon which we rest so heavily."

Excerpt from Foreign Policy  
Address by President Ford  
before a Joint Session of  
Congress on April 10, 1975

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